



North East
Learning Trust

Child protection and safeguarding: COVID-19 addendum

Contents

Important contacts	3
1. Scope and definitions.....	4
2. Core safeguarding principles	4
3. Reporting concerns	7
4. DSL (and deputy) arrangements	8
5. Working with other agencies.....	8
6. Monitoring attendance.....	9
7. Peer-on-peer abuse	9
8. Concerns about a staff member or volunteer	9
9. Support for children who aren't 'vulnerable' but where we have concerns	10
10. Contact plans	11
11. Safeguarding all children	11
12. Online safety	11
13. Mental health	12
14. Staff recruitment, training and induction	13
15. Children attending other settings.....	14
16. Monitoring arrangements.....	14
17. Links with other policies	14

Issue No:	1	Quality Document Type:	Addendum to existing policy
Date:	March2020	Ref:	TRUST/SAFEGUARDINGADDENDUM
		Originator of this document is:	J Barker

Important contacts

ROLE	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Mr D. Pilling	Daniel.pilling@teesdaleschool.co.uk
Deputy DSL	Mr A French	Alastair.french@teesdaleschool.co.uk
Designated member of senior leadership team if DSL (and deputy) are not on site	Ms C Ellis	clare.ellis@nelt.co.uk
Head of School	Ms C Ellis	clare.ellis@nelt.co.uk
Trust Virtual Head	Anna Walshaw	anna.walshaw@shottonhallacademy.co.uk
DCEO	Toni Spoons	toni.spoons@easingtonacademy.co.uk
DCEO	Janice Gorchach	janice.gorchach@nelt.co.uk
CEO	Lesley Powell	lesley.powell@shottonhallacademy.co.uk
Local authority designated officer (LADO)	Sharon Lewis	
Chair of Local Academy Council	Suzanne Duncan	Suzanne.duncan@eastdurham.ac.uk

Issue No:	1	Quality Document Type:	Addendum to existing policy
Date:	March2020	Ref:	TRUST/SAFEGUARDINGADDENDUM
		Originator of this document is:	J Barker

1. Scope and definitions

This addendum applies during the period of school closure due to COVID-19 and reflects updated advice from our 3 local safeguarding partners and local authority (Durham County Council)

It sets out changes to our normal child protection policy in light of the Department for Education's guidance [Coronavirus: safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers](#), and should be read in conjunction with that policy.

Unless covered here, our normal child protection policy continues to apply.

The Department for Education's (DfE's) definition of 'vulnerable children' includes those who:

- Have a social worker, including children:
 - With a child protection plan
 - Assessed as being in need
 - Looked after by the local authority
- Have an education, health, and care (EHC) plan

2. Core safeguarding principles

Keeping children safe in schools

KCSIE is statutory safeguarding guidance that schools and colleges should continue to have regard to as per their legislative duty and/or funding agreement requirements.

Whilst we acknowledge the pressure that the school is under, it remains essential that as far as possible the school continues to be a safe place for children. This additional guidance supports our governing body, senior leadership team, designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) and staff so they can continue to have appropriate regard to KCSIE and keep our children safe.

The way our school is currently operating in response to coronavirus (COVID-19) is fundamentally different to business as usual, however, several important safeguarding principles remain the same:

- regarding safeguarding, the best interests of children must always continue to come first
- if anyone in school has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to act and act immediately
- a DSL or deputy should be available
- it is essential that unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the children's workforce and/or gain access to children

Issue No:	1	Quality Document Type:	Addendum to existing policy
Date:	March2020	Ref:	TRUST/SAFEGUARDINGADDENDUM
		Originator of this document is:	J Barker

- children should continue to be protected when they are online

Child protection policy

The school will continue to adhere to the current child protection policy **updated in September 2019** which reflects ‘business as usual’, however this does not accurately reflect new arrangements in response to COVID-19.

The child protection policy has been reviewed and revised and will be kept under review as circumstances continue to evolve.

Updated advice received from Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership

Partnership working is vital during this current time and multi-agency safeguarding arrangements will continue as usual, however schools are to be mindful that this may be undertaken in a different way whilst trying to avoid as much face to face contact as possible.

Senior Leaders within Durham County Council will continue to review children’s circumstances and have implemented the following:

- Prioritising cases based on situation/circumstances etc.
- Moving to more agile working.
- Carry out multi-agency Strategy Meetings, Initial Child Protection Conferences, Review Child Protection Conferences, Core Groups and Looked After Reviews for children using virtual platforms wherever possible and will continue to work with partners to manage this.
- Face to face home visits will be done based on a risk assessment for the child in conjunction with managers. As much contact as possible with families will be done by phone and through virtual platforms where it is safe to do so. Where staff are visiting family homes, they will do so using guidance from Public Health England which includes the practice of social distancing.
- Children’s Social Care and Early Help will be arranging service delivery into 3 virtual locality hubs based in North, South and East Durham. Each will have a strategic safeguarding manager and will be working with partners in health and education to ensure that they use collective resources to provide support to those children who are most vulnerable and in need of contact or services. The work of the locality hubs at this time is focused on those children who are CIN; CP or children at risk of becoming Looked After.
- All new referrals for children where there are concerns for their welfare or safety should be made to First Contact in the usual way using the usual referral mechanisms.
- Requesting colleagues across partner agencies should proactively share information within existing multi agency team around family arrangements about families who they know are self-isolating, to avoid any unnecessary home visits and contact, ensuring all are protected from unnecessary exposure to the virus.

Issue No:	1	Quality Document Type:	Addendum to existing policy
Date:	March2020	Ref:	TRUST/SAFEGUARDINGADDENDUM
		Originator of this document is:	J Barker

- Continually reassess risk and reprioritise work across the partnership to ensure we all continue to provide a safeguarding service to those children and vulnerable adults who are most at risk.

Senior Leaders across Health organisations have implemented the following:

- All health partners have business continuity plans which identify Safeguarding Children and Adults and Children who are Looked After as key priority areas.
- All health partners will remain engaged in multiagency discussions including the MASH, MARAC and MAPPA as needed with SPOC arrangements in place.
- Work with partners to ensure that children who may have experienced abuse or neglect are appropriately and holistically assessed in a timely manner.
- Referrals for paediatric assessment will follow the same pathway of care although children may be assessed in different settings to minimise infection risks as per PHE and RCPCH guidance.
- Mental health support for those in crisis will be still be available.
- Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust (HDFT) 0-19 service will continue to provide a Safeguarding SPOC service for all staff including the MASH and are taking actions to ensure this will be maintained if there is a reduction in capacity. The 0-19 service will continue to prioritise safeguarding meetings including strategies, ICPCs and RCPCHs and core groups, and will use digital methods to maintain representation. Home visits for new babies, (Primary Visits) and visits to children and young people subject to a child protection plan will be maintained. Review Health Assessments will continue on a virtual or face to face basis, dependant on an assessment of cumulative risk.
- Looked After Children’s (LAC) Health Assessments are a statutory duty and will continue to be delivered. However, changes for Initial Health Assessments (IHA’s) are required in order to deliver assessments safely to patients and protect staff. It is possible that changes to workforce as a result of staff deployment and absence may result in delays in meeting the statutory timescales for the child/young person to be assessed (20 working days from entering care) but there will be regular communications with our partners on this issue.
- The CCG and Health partners have established mechanisms for regular information sharing for any concerns.
- GP’s will be providing primary care health input as needed within the guidance from Public Health England and are a key source of advice and information for multiagency processes.

Durham Constabulary have implemented the following:

- Developed business continuity plans which involve a tiered response to demand and resourcing levels. Overall, the plan aims to ensure at times of highest demand, business critical functions such as dealing with 999 calls, responding to the most

Issue No:	1	Quality Document Type:	Addendum to existing policy
Date:	March2020	Ref:	TRUST/SAFEGUARDINGADDENDUM
		Originator of this document is:	J Barker

serious incidents, and investigating the most serious crimes continue. This is a flexible model which may change daily or even hourly.

- A strong commitment by the Constabulary to maintain safeguarding children and vulnerable adults as a priority. This includes prioritising investigations where there are imminent risks of harm. As resources become more challenged, it is likely that investigators and supervisors will be pooled so that partners may not always be dealing with teams with which they have become familiar.
- Contingency plans include continued information and decision making and safety planning by the Central Referral Unit working within the MASHs, continuing with MARAC, MAPPA, the management of Registered Sex Offenders and providing services for victims through the Sexual Assault Referral Centre. Work in each of these areas will be prioritised in line with levels of risk and harm.
- More detailed plans are being developed to adapt how we work with health colleagues, HM Coroner, and other agencies in dealing with sudden and unexpected deaths of both adults and children.
- In relation to the most recent announcement from the Prime Minister (23rd March 2020) regarding minimising social gathering and restricting movement, the Constabulary is working with the Government to consider how these rules can most effectively be enforced and will seek to work closely with our communities to ensure that people know what is expected of them. Officers will be continuing respond to emergencies and deal with serious crime.

Partnership Business unit has implemented the following:

- We have agreed to cancel all non-urgent partnership meetings (sub-groups, task, and finish groups etc.) as well as multi-agency training sessions for the foreseeable time. We will conduct as much of the business as is feasible via e-mail or conference facility where possible when it is possible to do so.
- The Partnership business unit will continue to work throughout and are contactable on the usual e-mail addresses (details shown below).
- We can assure you that we are all working closely together to get through this and will continue to review our contingency plans and staffing capacity and will keep you updated. In the meantime, we would like to thank you all for all the work and support you are providing to support our children, vulnerable adults, and their families during this very challenging time.

3. Reporting concerns

All staff and volunteers must continue to act on any concerns they have about a child immediately. It is still vitally important to do this, both for children still attending school and those at home.

If school staff, staff from another school, or volunteers have any concerns about a child, they should:

- report their concern directly to the DSL on site

Issue No:	1	Quality Document Type:	Addendum to existing policy
Date:	March2020	Ref:	TRUST/SAFEGUARDINGADDENDUM
		Originator of this document is:	J Barker

- use the contact details provided to report their concern to the DSL (or deputy) working from home
- report their concern to the senior leader on site so that they can liaise with the DSL off site

ALL concerns passed to the designated safeguarding lead must be written, signed, and dated on the relevant 'Concern' form or CPOMS. Concerns should be addressed in accordance with section 3.5 of the main child protection policy.

As a reminder, all staff should continue to work with and support children's social workers, where they have one, to help protect vulnerable children.

4. DSL (and deputy) arrangements

We aim to have a trained DSL or deputy DSL on site wherever possible. Details of all-important contacts are listed in the 'Important contacts' section at the start of this addendum.

If our DSL (or deputy) is not in school, they can be contacted remotely using the contact details in the 'important contacts'.

If our DSL (or deputy) is unavailable, please contact Ms C Ellis (Head of School).

We will keep all school staff and volunteers informed via email as to who will be the DSL (or deputy) on any given day, and how to contact them.

We will ensure that DSLs (and deputies), wherever their location, know who the most vulnerable children in our school are.

On occasions where there is no DSL or deputy on site, a senior leader will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding. You can contact them by ringing the school on 01833 638 166, 07483 350 333 or studentsupport@teesdaleschool.co.uk

The senior leader will be responsible for liaising with the off-site DSL (or deputy) to make sure the DSL can:

- Identify the most vulnerable children in school
- Update and manage access to child protection files, where necessary
- Liaise with children's social workers where they need access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments

5. Working with other agencies

We will continue to work with children's social care, and with virtual school heads for looked-after and previously looked-after children.

We will continue to update this addendum where necessary, to reflect any updated guidance from:

- Our 3 local safeguarding partners

Issue No:	1	Quality Document Type:	Addendum to existing policy
Date:	March2020	Ref:	TRUST/SAFEGUARDINGADDENDUM
		Originator of this document is:	J Barker

- The local authority about children with education, health, and care (EHC) plans, the local authority designated officer and children’s social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need

6. Monitoring attendance

As most children will not be attending school during this period of school closure, we will not be completing our usual attendance registers or following our usual procedures to follow up on non-attendance.

The exception to this is where any child we expect to attend school during the closure does not attend or stops attending. In these cases, we will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parents or carers, by phoning home
- Notify their social worker, where they have one

We are using the Department for Education’s daily online attendance form to keep an accurate record of who is attending school.

We will make arrangements with parents and carers to make sure we have up-to-date emergency contact details, and additional contact details where possible.

7. Peer-on-peer abuse

We will continue to follow the principles set out in part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education when managing reports and supporting victims of peer-on-peer abuse.

Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately – about both children attending school and those at home.

8. Concerns about a staff member or volunteer

We will continue to follow the principles set out in part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Staff should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately – whether those concerns are about staff/volunteers working on site or remotely.

We will continue to refer adults who have harmed or pose a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

We will continue to refer potential cases of teacher misconduct to the Teaching Regulation Agency. We will do this using the email address Misconduct.Teacher@education.gov.uk for the duration of the COVID-19 period, in line with government guidance.

Issue No:	1	Quality Document Type:	Addendum to existing policy
Date:	March2020	Ref:	TRUST/SAFEGUARDINGADDENDUM
		Originator of this document is:	J Barker

9. Support for children who are not 'vulnerable' but where we have concerns

We have the option to offer places in school to children who do not meet the Department for Education's definition of 'vulnerable', but who we have safeguarding concerns about. We will work with parents/carers to do this. If these children will not be attending school, we will put a contact plan in place, as explained in section 10 below.

10. Contact plans

We have contact plans and records of contact for children with a social worker and children who we have safeguarding concerns about, for circumstances where:

- They will not be attending school (for example where the school, parent/carer, and social worker, if relevant, have decided together that this would not be in the child's best interests); or
- They would usually attend but have to self-isolate

The contact plan states

- That the school will make contact on a daily basis
- Which staff member(s) will make contact – as far as possible, this will be staff who know the family well
- Staff will make contact via phone call, email, or text
- Staff will update social worker once a week

We have agreed these plans with children's social care where relevant and will review them.

If we cannot make contact, we will contact the children's social care and/or ring 101 and arrange for a welfare call.

11. Safeguarding all children

Staff and volunteers are aware that this difficult time potentially puts all children at greater risk.

Staff and volunteers will continue to be alert to any signs of abuse, or effects on pupils' mental health that are also safeguarding concerns, and act on concerns immediately in line with the procedures set out in section 3 above

For children at home, they will look out for signs like:

- Not completing assigned work or logging on to school systems
- No contact from children or families

Issue No:	1	Quality Document Type:	Addendum to existing policy
Date:	March2020	Ref:	TRUST/SAFEGUARDINGADDENDUM
		Originator of this document is:	J Barker

- Seeming more withdrawn during any class check-ins or video calls

Children are likely to be spending more time online during this period – see section 12 below for our approach to online safety both in and outside school.

See section 13 below for information on how we will support pupils' mental health.

12. Online safety

12.1 In school

It will be more important than ever that schools provide a safe environment, including online. Our school will continue to ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to protect children when they are online on the school's IT systems or recommended resources.

The [UK Council for Internet Safety provides information to help governing boards assure themselves](#) that any new arrangements continue to effectively safeguard children online.

The [UK Safer Internet Centre's professional online safety helpline](#) also provides support for the children's workforce with any online safety issues they face. The Local Authority can also continue to provide support.

12.2 Outside school

Staff will continue to be alert to signs that a child may be at risk of harm online, and act on any concerns immediately, following our reporting procedures as set out in section 3 of this addendum.

We will make sure children know how to report any concerns they have back to our school, and signpost them to other sources of support too.

All schools should consider the safety of their children when they are asked to work online. The starting point for online teaching will follow the same principles as set out in the Trust's staff code of conduct. This policy includes, amongst other things, acceptable use of technologies, staff pupil/student relationships and communication including the use of social media. The policy applies equally to any existing or new online and distance learning arrangements which are introduced.

We will ensure that any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Below are some things to consider when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- No 1:1s, groups only

Issue No:	1	Quality Document Type:	Addendum to existing policy
Date:	March2020	Ref:	TRUST/SAFEGUARDINGADDENDUM
		Originator of this document is:	J Barker

- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and the background should be blurred.
- The live class should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use platforms provided by the school to communicate with pupils
- Staff should record, the length, time, date, and attendance of any sessions held.

13.3 Working with parents and carers

We will make sure parents and carers:

- Are aware of the potential risks to children online and the importance of staying safe online
- Know what our school is asking children to do online, including what sites they will be using and who they will be interacting with from our school
- Are aware that they should only use reputable online companies or tutors if they wish to supplement the remote teaching and resources our school provides
- Know where else they can go for support to keep their children safe online

Support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online includes:

- [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [London Grid for Learning](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Net-aware](#) - for support for parents and careers from the NSPCC
- [Parent info](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Thinkuknow](#) - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - advice for parents and carers

The department encourages schools and colleges to share this support with parents and carers.

Issue No:	1	Quality Document Type:	Addendum to existing policy
Date:	March2020	Ref:	TRUST/SAFEGUARDINGADDENDUM
		Originator of this document is:	J Barker

13. Mental health

Where possible, we will continue to offer our current support for pupil mental health for all pupils. The school counselor remains available for virtual consultations and the school has a dedicated email student support@teesdaleschool.co.uk

We will also signpost all pupils, parents, and staff to other resources to support good mental health at this time.

When setting expectations for pupils learning remotely and not attending school, teachers will bear in mind the potential impact of the current situation on both children's and adults' mental health.

14. Staff recruitment, training, and induction

14.1 Recruiting new staff and volunteers

We continue to recognise the importance of robust safer recruitment procedures, so that adults and volunteers who work in our school are safe to work with children.

We will continue to follow our safer recruitment procedures, and part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

In urgent cases, when validating proof of identity documents to apply for a DBS check, we will initially accept verification of scanned documents via online video link, rather than being in physical possession of the original documents. This approach is in line with revised guidance from the DBS.

New staff must still present the original documents when they first attend work at our school.

We will continue to do our usual checks on new volunteers and do risk assessments to decide whether volunteers who are not in regulated activity should have an enhanced DBS check, in accordance with paragraphs 167-172 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

14.2 Staff 'on loan' from other schools

We will assess the risks of staff 'on loan' working in our school and seek assurance from the 'loaning' school that staff have had the appropriate checks. These risk assessments will be carried out by an identified Trust HR lead

We will also use the DBS Update Service, where these staff have signed up to it, to check for any new information.

14.3 Safeguarding induction and training

We will make sure staff and volunteers are aware of changes to our procedures and local arrangements.

New staff and volunteers will continue to receive:



A safeguarding induction



A copy of our children protection policy (and this addendum)

Issue No:	1	Quality Document Type:	Addendum to existing policy
Date:	March2020	Ref:	TRUST/SAFEGUARDINGADDENDUM
		Originator of this document is:	J Barker

➤ Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1

We will decide on a case-by-case basis what level of safeguarding induction staff 'on loan' need. In most cases, this will be:

- A copy of our child protection policy and this addendum
- Confirmation of local processes
- Confirmation of DSL arrangements

14.4 Keeping records of who is on site

We will keep a record of which staff and volunteers are on site each day, and that appropriate checks have been carried out for them.

We will continue to keep our single central record up to date.

We will use the single central record to log:

- Everyone working or volunteering in our school each day, including staff 'on loan'
- Details of any risk assessments carried out on staff and volunteers on loan from elsewhere

15. Children attending other settings

Where children are temporarily required to attend another setting, we will make sure the receiving school is provided with any relevant welfare and child protection information.

Wherever possible, our DSL (or deputy) and/or special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) will share, as applicable:

- The reason(s) why the child is considered vulnerable and any arrangements in place to support them
- The child's EHC plan, child in need plan, child protection plan or personal education plan
- Details of the child's social worker
- Details of the virtual school head

Where the DSL, deputy or SENCO cannot share this information, the senior leader(s) identified in section 4 will do this.

We will share this information before the child arrives as far as is possible, and otherwise as soon as possible afterwards.

Issue No:	1	Quality Document Type:	Addendum to existing policy
Date:	March2020	Ref:	TRUST/SAFEGUARDINGADDENDUM
		Originator of this document is:	J Barker

16. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the 3 local safeguarding partners, the LA or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 4 weeks by J. Barker. At every review, it will be approved by the Trustees.

17. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following Trust and Academy policies and procedures:

- Child protection policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Staff code of conduct
- IT acceptable use policy
- Health and safety policy
- Online safety policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Whistleblowing policy

Issue No:	1	Quality Document Type:	Addendum to existing policy
Date:	March2020	Ref:	TRUST/SAFEGUARDINGADDENDUM
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